



CITY OF SUGAR LAND

Community Newsletter

A WELL PLANNED COMMUNITY • SAFEST CITY IN THE AREA • STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY • RESPONSIBLE CITY GOVERNMENT • MOBILITY FOR PEOPLE

FALL 2002



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Facelift for Sugar Mill Park

With the recent re-opening of Sugar Mill Park, the City has completed the renovation and/or construction of Sugar Land's 11 neighborhood-level parks, an example of how sales taxes improve neighborhoods.

The latest improvements at Sugar Mill Park — a facility that represents five acres of the City's 347 acres of community and neighborhood parks — include a new picnic pavilion with benches and tables, a fountain, play-ground equipment and lush landscaping.

The relaxing and scenic location has long been noted for its outstanding mature oaks and elm trees. Many of



the new features address aesthetics and preservation. As an example, the existing pond has historically been a popular fishing location for neighborhood children; the addition of a fountain adds a new visual effect to the pond and ensures a sufficient oxygen level to sustain fish.



Participate in Determining Sugar Land's Future!

An open house to obtain feedback from the public on Sugar Land's draft Comprehensive Plan has been scheduled from 4-6:30 p.m., on Nov. 12, at the Sugar Land Community Center, 226 Matlage Way.

Originally adopted in 1993, the revised draft includes 13 goals to guide the City for the next 10-20 years, with objectives and strategies to be accomplished within the next five years. The plan will form the basis for all aspects of the City's decisions and policies.

A draft of the recommended Goals, Objectives, and Strategies is available on the Web at www.ci.sugar-land.tx.us. For questions, contact City Planner Sabine Kuenzel at (281) 275-2818.

Repairing Leaks Controls Wastewater Charges

Each year, the City calculates customers' wastewater charges using a "cap" method. To determine a ceiling for wastewater charges, irrigation consumption is deducted from wastewater charges. Wastewater charges are calculated based on an average household use of water/wastewater during the months of November through February.

Average consumption is then applied to the remainder of the billing months, regardless of the amount of water used. This method results in lower wastewater charges for the year.

Residents are encouraged to monitor December, January and February bills, as the average usage during the winter quarter determines wastewater charges implemented in March. During winter months, most plants are dormant, and landscape watering should decrease or cease. Therefore, only household use should be captured during the winter months.

CITY COUNCIL

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At-Large Position One

Daniel O. Wong
At-Large Position Two

Donald Smithers
Mayor Pro-Tem,
Single Member District One

Cyril Hosley
Single Member District Two

J. Brian Gaston
Single Member District Three

Michael S. Schiff
Single Member District Four

CITY MANAGEMENT

Allen Bogard
City Manager

David Ellison
Assistant City Manager/Public Safety

Paul Hofmann
Assistant City Manager/Community Service

ASK CITY

A resource for citizens who do not know where or whom to call, Ask City provides high quality customer service for Sugar Land residents and visitors. Inquiries, complaints, compliments and requests may be directed to 281/ ASK-CITY (275-2489).

Front Cover Photos

Badges of Courage

Pictured top: The Sugar Land Fire, Police and Emergency Management Departments shared a variety of preparedness and safety information during Badges of Courage, an event held by the Sugar Land Exchange Club and First Colony Mall to honor public safety personnel on Sept. 11.

Concert in the Park

Pictured inset left and center: Sugar Land's free fall concerts, titled the Lonestar Music Series, attracted crowds averaging 1,000 at Eldridge and Oyster Creek Parks. Expect more Sunday afternoon concerts in the spring.

Boards and Commissions

Pictured inset right: Members of Sugar Land's Boards and Commissions received their oaths of office during a recent City Council meeting. For a complete list and additional photo, see page 5.

State Targets U.S. 59 Expansion to Grand Parkway

There's good news for motorists traveling U.S. Highway 59 each day during rush hour. The state is expected to open a total of eight continuous lanes from State Highway 6 into southwest Houston by spring 2003, and the tri-level interchange at U.S. Highway 90A and U.S. Highway 59 is expected to open late in 2003.

With these milestones nearing completion, the state has announced funding for the expansion of U.S. Highway 59 from State Highway 6 to the Grand Parkway. This segment of the freeway will also include a total of eight lanes, bi-directional diamond lanes and continuous frontage roads. Construction is expected to begin in 2003, dependent on environmental clearances



Temporary Auxiliary Lanes to Provide Relief Along U.S. 59

A temporary change along U.S. Highway 59 between the Grand Parkway and Sweetwater Boulevard is expected to reduce traffic congestion along the heavily traveled corridor prior to the permanent expansion of U.S. Highway 59. The state is expected to complete its conversion of existing shoulders into auxiliary lanes at the following locations by the end of the year:

- Southbound, the shoulder will extend from the entrance ramp of U.S. Highway 59 at First Colony Boulevard to the exit ramp for University Boulevard.

- Northbound, the shoulder will extend from the entrance ramp of U.S. Highway 59 at:

- Greatwood to the exit ramp for University Boulevard.
- University Boulevard to the exit ramp for State Highway 6.

The construction needed to convert the existing shoulders is occurring at night to reduce the impact on traffic.

Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery

In three of every 10 reported fires in homes equipped with smoke alarms, the devices did not work. Households with non-working smoke alarms now outnumber those with no smoke alarms. Smoke alarms fail most often because of missing, dead or disconnected batteries. In Sugar Land, many smoke alarms are found to be non-functional because of age, dust and dirt, renovations and disconnected wires.

If your smoke alarm is more than 10 years old, it needs to be replaced. Smoke alarms should be tested once a month and batteries replaced at least once a year or when the alarm chirps (indicating a low battery).

For a free smoke alarm or to schedule a home inspection, call (281) 275-2859.



Bettie Woodard, of Lowe's Home Improvement, and Sugar Land Fire Lt. Brian Holcombe were recently at the home of Felicia Austin-Toliver as part of the Sugar Land Fire Department's free smoke alarm and home inspection program. Lowe's donated 400 smoke alarms and about 100 batteries.

What Does the FY2003 Budget Mean to Me?



City Council adopted the fiscal year 2002-2003 budget of \$109.3 million in September. Included are key items listed here:

- **Tax Rate:** The 2002 tax rate is 32.886 cents, a decrease of .444 cents from the current tax rate of 33.33 cents. Your tax bill may increase or decrease, depending on the change in value of your home, as assessed by the Central Appraisal District.
- **Enhanced Services:** The budget includes the following additions:
 1. Police Staffing: Four officers, as well as two administrative and technical support positions.
 2. Emergency Management: The Office of Emergency Management was created in June 2002. The budget funds an Emergency Management Director and support staff position and furnishes and equips a dedicated Emergency Operations Center.
 3. Drainage Improvements: A new drainage engineer will improve the City's ability to manage and implement drainage improvements throughout the City.
 4. Right-of-Way: A new right-of-way manager will control the use of the City's right-of-way by private sector entities.
- **Water/Wastewater Rates:** The budget includes an increase in water/wastewater revenues based on new rates effective by April 2003. The City will be contracting with a utility rate consultant to recommend the most feasible rate structure. The impact to individual customers will vary depending on water usage and the rate structure selected by City Council.
- **Fire Station #6:** Fire Station #6 is scheduled to open in late summer 2003. Only the second fire station to be built outside the City limits, but within Sugar Land's extraterritorial jurisdiction, Fire Station #6 will be located adjacent to Greatwood on Sansbury Boulevard at Crabb River Road. Greatwood, River Park, Tara and Canyon Gate municipal utility districts will fund the fire station, which will significantly improve response times to Greatwood and the surrounding areas. Fire Station #5, that had handled this area on a contract basis, will now be able to better serve Sugar Land residents.

Major FY2003 Capital Improvement Projects

- **City Hall:** Construction of a new City Hall is expected to begin this year. The initial build-out of 70,000 square feet is expected to take a total of 25 months for design and construction. Future build-out to a total of 82,000 square feet will accommodate Sugar Land's ultimate population projection of 200,000 residents.
- **Lexington Boulevard:** Lexington will be extended from Sweetwater Boulevard to University Boulevard.
- **State Highway 6 overpass at U.S. Highway 90A:** The City will fund a 10 percent local match for right-of-way acquisition, utilities adjustments and enhancements (i.e., signage, ornamental traffic signals, etc.).
- **Streets:** Major street reconstructions will occur in Covington West and along West Airport, with minor street rehabilitation work conducted in other parts of the City.
- **West Airport Boulevard:** West Airport will be extended from Eldridge Road to Burney Road.
- **Water/Wastewater:** The water well at the Lakeview Water Plant, between Eldridge and Gillingham, will be replaced. This facility serves customers throughout the City.

Boards and Commissions

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Steve Porter
Matthew Shepard
Ralph Young, chairman

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A. Reagan Clark, chairman
Sally Sims
John Adkins
Ken English
James Kij
Paul Barnett
Dinesh Shah
James A. Thompson, Council liaison

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Lt. David Marcaurele, chairman
Becky Engbrock
Dr. James L. Cox

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Gordon Yeatts
Victor Zavala, Sr.
Doug Turner, chairman
Stephen Caldwell
Jeng Liang
Russell Bird
Jim Lancaster, alternate member
Al Abramczyk, alternate member
Sandra Boughal, alternate member

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Kathy Huebner
Mary Von Tungeln
Dinesh Shah
Thomas Chapman
Joe Zimmerman, chairman
Andre McDonald
Narendra Patel
Stephen Ewbank
Ray Nixon



KEEP SUGAR LAND BEAUTIFUL

Tricia Bradbury
Pam Britz
Sandy Denton
Lillian Tigard
Don Comer
Jane Goodsill
Carol Beth Gore
Sherry Carter
Mary Beth McCaughey
Margaret Hall
Lou Ann Newman
Melissa Hoffman, Executive Director

PARKS AND RECREATION POLICY ADVISORY BOARD

Suehing Woo Yee Chiang
Mike Gibson, chairman
Sam Bartholomew
Charles Han
Gary Sanford
Bobette Dunn
Mable Austin
Brian Gaston, Council liaison

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W. Michael Yentzen
Rawley Outlaw
Sean Burnett
Joe Zimmerman, chairman
Andre McDonald
Kathy Huebner
Nancy Porter, secretary
Cyril Hosley, Council liaison

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Andre McDonald
Jeff Tallas
Windell Williams
Lydia Bourg
Bridget Yeung
Naomi Lam

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George Turner
David Wallace
Robert P. Pickell, chairman
William Sun
Bridget R. Yeung, vice chairman/
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Michael Schiff

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Brian Gaston
Dennis Parmer
Tim Stubenrouch
Lewis Luckenbach, III, chairman

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Gil Saenz
Steve Bowers
Sharon Baca
Paul Barnett
Roxie Campbell
Doug Ehrenkranz

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Michael Siwierka
Greg Stirman
Louis Garvin
Jared Jameson
Vincent DiCosimo, secretary
Joan Damon
Robert Treacy, vice chairman

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Leo Meerman
Don Burns, chairman
Ed Hines
Deloise Holmes, Jr.
Alan Kwan
Floyd Thigpen
Karyn Dean

Police Chief Earnest Taylor Recognized for Lifetime Achievement

In recognition of an illustrious 34-year law enforcement career in Sugar Land, former Police Chief Earnest Taylor was honored with the Exchange Club of Sugar Land's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Taylor began his law enforcement career in 1969 as one of two police officers under the direction of Sugar Land Police Chief J.E. Fendley. He served as chief of police from 1992 to earlier this year. Under his leadership, the Sugar Land Police



Department achieved national accreditation through the Commission for the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented during the Exchange Club's Badges of Courage event held in partnership with First Colony Mall on Sept. 11. Also recognized was Sugar Land Fire Lt. Greg Hopper for his participation in the search and rescue efforts in New York following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center towers.

A Job Well Done!

Sugar Land Continues GFOA Winning Streak



Pictured (L-R) are Accounting Manager Alka Shah, Controller Dianne Stanford and Assistant Controller William Pena.

For the 17th consecutive year, Sugar Land has received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. It is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting.

2002 City Calendar Lands Savvy

Sugar Land's 2002 calendar/annual report has received a Savvy Award from the City-County Communications and Marketing Association. The national awards program recognizes outstanding local government achievements in communications, public-sector marketing and citizen-government relationships. The Savvies salute skilled and effective city/county/agency professionals who have creatively planned and carried out successful innovations. The City's 2003 calendars will be mailed in December.



Sugar Land and ECO Resources Cited for Innovation

The National Council for Public-Private Partnerships (NCPPP) awarded a 2002 Project Award to the City of Sugar Land and ECO Resources for South Zone Water Utility System. The awards recognize companies and organizations that have successfully completed a unique and innovative public-private partnership. This prestigious award illustrates some of the best practices and applications in the field of public-private partnerships. The project has been added to NCPPP's Web site listing of case studies.

SLPD Trading Card Program Continues

Collectors of Sugar Land Police Department trading cards probably won't dust off their collection one day to find a mint condition rookie card worth thousands. But if the program continues to serve its purpose — the creation of a personal connection between kids and cops — then the cards are priceless. Of course, a 2002 "Earnest Taylor," the card that capped the 34-year career of former Chief Earnest Taylor, might make an interesting conversation piece one day.



The 2003 Sugar Land Police Department trading card set is now available. Kids collecting the entire set are eligible to receive prizes at the conclusion of this year's contest. A good way to collect them all is to schedule a tour of the police facility or invite officers to speak about safety and/or police-related issues in group settings.

For more information about the program and contest, please contact Sgt. Angie Womble at (281) 275-2520.

New City Hall Construction Takes Advantage of New Legislation

Sugar Land will be following new state guidelines for cities in the selection of a general contractor for the construction of a new City Hall to be located in Sugar Land Town Square.

For years, competitive bidding laws required cities to award construction contracts to the lowest responsible bidder. The City's selection of Senate Bill 510's "competitive sealed proposal" method for selecting a general contractor requires award to the bidder offering the best value, as opposed to the low bid. The best value will be based on specific criteria, including the prospective contractor's demonstrated experience with buildings of a similar nature, the experience of the contractor's team, financial



stability and the company's safety record.

The City is selecting the general contractor in 2002 to assist with the design of the project, with construction anticipated to begin in the summer. The new City Hall should open its doors in October 2004.

'Municipal' Replaced with Sugar Land Regional Airport

What's in a name? In the case of the newly renamed Sugar Land Regional Airport, the term "Regional" more accurately reflects the facility's role as a corporate business executive airport serving Sugar Land, Fort Bend County and the greater southwest Houston metropolitan area.

The new designation indicates the airport's success as a leader in catering to the needs of corporate aviation, as well as general aviation. The airport accommodates the largest of the corporate-type business jets, such as the Gulfstream V and the Global Express, with a state-of-the-art air traffic control tower and radar system, an instrument landing system, high-intensity lighting and a reinforced, concrete runway measuring 100 feet wide by 8,000 feet in length.

The Sugar Land Regional Airport is designated as a reliever airport to the George Bush Intercontinental and William P. Hobby Airports and is the only public-use airport located in Fort Bend County.



Ordinance Update

Alarm Systems

Chapter 3, Sec. 3-2 and Sec. 3-3: Alarm system operators must post a visible notice on the outside of their residence containing the name and telephone number of one or more persons to contact to disable the alarm system after activation. Instead of the posted notice, the name and telephone number of the person to contact may be provided to the City or, in the case of a monitored alarm system, to the company monitoring the alarm. The City will not charge a fee for responding to false alarm activation from one alarm system for the first five responses in a calendar year; however, after the fifth, the City will charge \$50 to the person in control of the premises for each response.

Seniors to See City Tax Savings

For about 100 Sugar Land homes with a senior exemption, a recently passed property tax exemption increase means they will pay no taxes to the City. The remaining 1,900 homes with a senior exemption will receive a reduction in their tax bills of at least \$214 dollars, a figure based on the City's new senior exemption of \$60,000 and the homestead exemption of \$5,000.

The fiscal year 2002-2003 budget includes an increase in the over-65 homestead exemption from \$40,000 to \$60,000. The \$20,000 increase equates to additional savings to seniors of \$66.

According to a survey of 12 area cities, Sugar Land offers one of the highest exemptions to seniors, and Sugar Land's exemption is the highest in a survey conducted of 10 cities with similar population ranges. In both surveys, Sugar Land seniors pay one of the lowest average tax bills.

Smoking Prohibited

Chapter 16, Article IV, Sec. 16-51: Smoking by any person is unlawful in the enclosed public areas of the following places: retail stores, including the lobbies, hallways and other common areas in multiple-unit retail stores and malls; libraries, educational facilities, museums, auditoriums, theaters and art galleries; child care facilities; health care facilities; governmental facilities; airports; and hotels, motels and convention centers. Smoking by any person is unlawful in the public areas of a sports arena and in any building or motor vehicle owned by or controlled by the City of Sugar Land.

It's a Homer

Shouts of “Play Ball!” will be commonplace soon at the new Imperial Park at Matlage Way and U.S. Highway 90A.

Formerly known as the girls’ softball complex, the 44-acre facility includes three new softball fields, a concession/restroom/press box building, additional parking and enhanced landscaping.

The park’s initial redesign also includes picnic tables and a playground, intended to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for young children who are not involved in the softball games.

Imperial Park will ultimately include 11 softball fields and a jogging trail.



DATES TO REMEMBER

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- 5** City Council Meeting at City Hall
- 12** Comprehensive Plan Open House at the Sugar Land Community Center
- 12** Planning and Zoning Commission at City Hall
- 19** City Council Meeting at City Hall
- 28** Thanksgiving Day
City Offices Closed
No Solid Waste Collection
- 29** City Offices Closed
Thursday's Solid Waste Collection
- 30** Friday's Solid Waste Collection

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- 3** City Council Meeting at City Hall
- 10** Planning and Zoning Commission at City Hall
- 12** Senior Holiday Luncheon & Dance at Sugar Land Community Center
- 13** Share Your Holiday Food Drive at Sugar Land Community Center
- 17** City Council Meeting at City Hall
- 25** Christmas Day
City Offices Closed
Regular Solid Waste Collection



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